



U. S. S. JOHNSTON (DD 821)

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From: Commanding Officer, USS JOHNSTON (DD-821)

To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-09B9)

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Encl: (1) Command History for 1967

1. In accordance with reference (a), the Command History for 1967 is submitted herewith as enclosure (1).


R. W. CURRAN

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COMBAND HISTORY

USS JOHNSON (DD-971)

Commander Robert W. GORDAN, USN

Commanding Officer

1967

OPNAV Report 9750-1

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CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	APPLYING DATA
1 January	Depart, Beirut, Lebanon	
12 January	Participated in OS/125 Discovered leak in fuel tank	
14 January	Arrived Naples for fuel tank repair	
26 January	Visited Palma, Mallorca	
31 January	Detachment from Sixth Fleet	
9 February	Arrival Charleston	
9 March	Change of command	
10 March	Departure for SPRINGBOARD 1967	
17 March	Visited San Juan	
30 March	NTPC	III-15
14 April	Departure for CLOVEHITCH III	III-16 to III-18
6 June	Family Cruise	
8 June	Departure for Midshipman Cruise	III-13
14 June	Contaminated fuel received from WAGAMAW	
23 June	Visited San Juan	
1 July	Visited Mobile, Alabama	III-19 to III-20
24 July	Departure for LASEOUT	
2 October	NTPC	III-21 to III-22
15 November	Departure for Vietnam	
19 November	Arrival, Happort for repairs to propeller shaft bearing	
27 December	Arrival, Subic Bay, Philippines	

COMMAND

USS JOHNSTON (DD-821), homeported in Charleston, South Carolina, was commanded by Commander John J. MINGO, USN, until 9 March, at which time he was relieved by Commander Robert W. CURRAN, USN, who retained command throughout the remainder of 1967. JOHNSTON is assigned to Destroyer Division FOUR TWO of Destroyer Squadron FOUR, a unit of Cruiser-Destroyer Flotilla SIX. At the end of 1967, 16 officers and 271 enlisted men were assigned. JOHNSTON is a FRAM I destroyer with the primary mission of Anti-submarine Warfare.

OPERATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Nineteen Hundred and Sixty-seven saw JOHNSTON complete a Mediterranean cruise, participate in three major Atlantic Fleet exercises, and deploy to the Western Pacific for duty in Vietnam. The year began in Beirut, Lebanon where the officers and men celebrated the New Year after spending over two months in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf. Departing Beirut on 4 January, JOHNSTON proceeded to rendezvous with units of Task Forces 60 and 61, to participate for six days in an amphibious exercise in the vicinity of the Island of Sardinia. During this period, JOHNSTON participated in OS/125, conducted by Operational Test and Evaluation Force, to evaluate the suitability of Vertical Replenishment (VERTREP) of 5"/38 caliber ammunition and ASROC missiles. During this test, JOHNSTON received by UH-46 Helicopter two dummy ASROC missiles and several pallets of 5"/38 ammunition on its DASH flight deck.

During the amphibious exercise, a ruptured seam was discovered in one of JOHNSTON's fuel tanks. To effect repairs, she was ordered to proceed to Naples, Italy, instead of the previously scheduled liberty port of Beaulieu, France. JOHNSTON arrived in Naples on 14 January for a three day availability with the Sixth Fleet destroyer tender, during

which the fuel tank was repaired. Underway from Naples on 18 January, JOHNSTON joined other units of Destroyer Squadron FOUR in transit to Gibraltar, B.C.C., for turnover of duty and OUTCHOP from Sixth Fleet.

During this transit, it was learned that JOHNSTON's duty with the Sixth Fleet would be extended for an undetermined amount of time, awaiting the Sixth Fleet arrival of the Atlantic Fleet destroyer USS BORIE (DD-704) which was undergoing repairs prior to her departure for the Mediterranean. JOHNSTON continued her transit to Gibraltar, arriving 21 January, at which time she joined newly arrived Destroyer Squadron TWO for operations in the Western Mediterranean operations areas with Commander, Task Group 60.2. After participating in various training exercises from 22 to 25 January, JOHNSTON was detached from Destroyer Squadron TWO and directed to proceed to Palma, Mallorca, arriving 26 January for a four day period of rest and recreation. During this visit, it was learned that repairs had been completed to the USS BORIE, and that she was finally enroute to the Mediterranean to relieve JOHNSTON.

On her way home at 18st, JOHNSTON departed Palma 30 January enroute to Rota, Spain, where she met and was relieved by BORIE 31 January. Underway immediately after turnover of duty, JOHNSTON set a course for the Azores Islands at 20 knots with the intent of refueling there before departing on her final leg across the Atlantic to Charleston, South Carolina. On 2 February, having arrived off-shore of the Azores, JOHNSTON learned that there was no fuel available there. Having already expended a large quantity of fuel while proceeding from Rota at 20 knots, JOHNSTON was faced with the probability of a low fuel state during the latter part of the Atlantic transit, and was directed to proceed to Bermuda to refuel.

On 4 February it was learned that the Newport, Rhode Island based fleet oiler USS SALAMONIE (AO-26) had been directed to proceed to rendezvous with JOHNSTON for underway refueling. Rendezvous and refueling from SALAMONIE was accomplished on 6 February, and upon completion JOHNSTON set a course directly for Charleston. At the time of refueling, JOHNSTON had less than 40% of her fuel remaining. On 9 February, JOHNSTON steamed into the Cooper River to arrive in Charleston at last. There would be one month of leave and upkeep before JOHNSTON would depart for the Caribbean to participate in Operation SPRINGBOARD 1967.

Shortly before JOHNSTON's scheduled departure for SPRINGBOARD, it was learned that the Commanding Officer, Commander J.J. MINGO, would be unable to depart with the ship for medical reasons. Commander MINGO was scheduled to be relieved by Commander R. W. CURRAN after JOHNSTON's return from SPRINGBOARD on 27 March, but because of his hospitalization, Commander CURRAN was ordered to report to JOHNSTON to assume command and take the ship to the Caribbean. After a brief change of command ceremony on 9 March, JOHNSTON was underway for SPRINGBOARD on 10 March with Commander CURRAN having been Commanding Officer for a mere 20 hours.

JOHNSTON arrived in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, on 13 March to embark a team of observers from USS OWENS (DD-776) who would observe JOHNSTON's Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI) on the next day. On 14 March, after a rigorous day of simulated air, surface, and sub-surface attacks, and a long list of simulated equipment and personnel casualties imposed by the OWENS inspection team, JOHNSTON returned to St. Thomas to disembark the OWENS team and learn that she had received a score of 87.3 in the

annual ORI. On 15 March JOHNSTON was underway from the Virgin Islands to San Juan, Puerto Rico with units of Destroyer Squadron FOUR in company, and while enroute conducted competitive training exercises, including a 5"/38 caliber surface firing, a tube-launched torpedo firing, and a DASH (Drone Anti-submarine Helicopter) torpedo launch which scored a direct hit on the target submarine USS CARP (SS-338). Arriving in San Juan on 17 March, JOHNSTON embarked Detachment "C" of Fleet Composite Squadron SIX with six fixed-wing anti-aircraft target drones and associated radio control equipment. After 3 days of rest and recreation in San Juan, JOHNSTON and Detachment "C" were underway on 20 March to provide one day of target drone services to units of Task Group 23.1, and to test her own guns against a high speed, highly maneuverable air target. Upon completion of the day's activities, JOHNSTON returned to San Juan to disembark the drone detachment. Underway again at midnight of 20 March, she proceeded to the Puerto Rico operations areas for more competitive training exercises, and between 21 and 24 April, JOHNSTON expended 217 rounds of 5"/38 projectiles against air and surface targets, and scored two direct torpedo hits on the target submarine USS CUTLASS (SS-478), one ASROC (Anti-submarine Rocket) launched and one tube launched. After refueling in Roosevelt Roads, she departed the Caribbean with Destroyer Squadron FOUR on 25 March to return to Charleston and complete preparations for her annual NPTI (Navy Technical Proficiency Inspection) scheduled for 30 and 31 March.

JOHNSTON arrived in Charleston 27 March. After two days of vigorous drilling in ASROC (Anti-submarine Rocket) missile handling and casualty control, JOHNSTON received a five man team from Nuclear Weapons Training Center, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, to conduct and observe the inspection. The two-day inspection was completed 31 March, and JOHNSTON was assigned a

merit of OUTSTANDING with a grade of 95.5.

After two short weeks of leave and upkeep, JOHNSTON was underway again 14 April for Operation CLOVEHITCH III. JOHNSTON was assigned with other Destroyer Squadron FOUR units to the Orange Force contingent, made up of those ships that would act as the enemy forces opposing an amphibious operation in the Caribbean. JOHNSTON transited north to Morehead City, North Carolina, which was the staging area for amphibious Task Force 29, and upon reaching her destination commenced operating as a Soviet electronics intelligence and surveillance trawler. When the task force got underway for transit to the Caribbean landing area, JOHNSTON conducted shadowing operations, reporting to the Orange Force commander the position, size, and composition of the main force during transit. Off the coast of Florida, JOHNSTON joined other units of the Orange Force and conducted simulated raids on the amphibious ships and their escorts. Once in the Caribbean, she conducted intensive competitive training exercises, again scoring a direct hit on the target submarine USS SIRAGO (SS-485) with a tube-launched torpedo. On 26 April JOHNSTON joined other units participating in CLOVEHITCH III for transit north to Charleston, arriving 1 May.

The month of May provided the officers and men of JOHNSTON with a needed period of rest and recreation, and permitted minor repairs and upkeep on a ship that had been operating almost constantly since September of the previous year. The first week of June saw the JOHNSTON again preparing for deployment, this time for the Atlantic Fleet Midshipman Training Cruise in the Caribbean.

On 6 June, JOHNSTON conducted a "Family Cruise" for the dependents of her officers and men. As the sea conditions outside of Charleston Harbor

were considered too rough for the "landlubbers", JOHNSTON confined her underway operations to a cruise down the Cooper River to Fort Sumter, where she reversed course and steamed back up the river to the Naval Base. Although the cruise was abbreviated, more than 250 members of JOHNSTON families expressed their appreciation and enjoyment for an enjoyable trip.

For the forthcoming Midshipman Training Cruise, JOHNSTON again embarked Detachment "C" of Fleet Composite Squadron SIX, this time consisting of twelve fixed wing aircraft target drones and two "Fire-fish" drone surface target motorboats. On 8 June, JOHNSTON was underway for Norfolk to embark 30 U.S. Naval Academy Midshipmen, five first class and 25 third class "youngsters". Spending the weekend in Norfolk, JOHNSTON departed 12 June with units of Task Group 23.5 for competitive training exercises off the Virginia Capes. The period of 12 to 15 June saw JOHNSTON and Detachment "C" providing drone aircraft target services to eight other destroyers of the Task Group. Also during this period many Midshipmen were first introduced to Naval Gunfire as they actually operated the 5"/38 caliber gun mounts in a locally controlled surface shoot.

On 14 June JOHNSTON refueled from USS WACCAMAW (AO-109). Observing white smoke issuing from the boilers using this new fuel, JOHNSTON engineers, after exhaustive testing, determined that 40,000 gallons of the fuel received from WACCAMAW was contaminated with free water and bottom sediment, which subsequently contaminated 40,000 gallons of good fuel. Much of the contaminated fuel was stripped overboard, however, and JOHNSTON departed from the Virginia Capes operating areas to proceed to the Caribbean as scheduled. From 15 to 20 June JOHNSTON

again acted as an Orange Force surface raider, shadowing and occasionally attacking units of Task Group 23.5 while in transit to the Caribbean. Having arrived in the Puerto Rico operating areas, JOHNSON again conducted intensive competitive training exercises, and on 21 June scored three hits out of three torpedoes fired at target submarine USS CHIVO (SS-341), using all three anti-submarine weapons systems: DASH, ASROC, and tube-launched torpedoes. On 23 June, the ship visited San Juan for a three-day liberty period.

JOHNSON departed San Juan 26 June, enroute to Mobile, Alabama, where the crew would celebrate the July 4th holiday with the citizens of that city. Arriving 1 July with Commander, Destroyer Division FOUR TWO aboard, JOHNSON was welcomed by the Mayor of Mobile, who with other city officials was guest of honor at a luncheon in JOHNSON's Wardroom. During the four-day visit the ship received 1147 visitors, hosted the Mobile Council Navy League, and sent officers, Midshipmen, and crew to parties sponsored by the Navy League. JOHNSON departed Mobile 5 July, enroute to Charleston for an eleven-day period of upkeep and debarkation of VC-6 Detachment "C".

Again departing Charleston 19 July, JOHNSON proceeded to Norfolk, Virginia in company with Destroyer Squadron FOUR. During the weekend of 22-23 July, JOHNSON Midshipmen, with Midshipmen embarked in other Charleston based units, attended the Midshipmen Ball given at the Norfolk Naval Station Officer's Club. On 24 July, JOHNSON was underway with Task Group 23.1 for Operation LASHOUT, an operation designed to exercise the Navy's ability to repel aggression on our southeastern shores. JOHNSON's primary duty during LASHOUT was station patrol

and while on station was attacked by simulated aggressor surface and sub-surface units. On 5 August, JOHNSTON returned from LASHOUT to Annapolis, Maryland, where she disembarked her Midshipman. The ship returned to Charleston 7 August, with a scheduled three months of leave, upkeep, repairs, outfitting, and preparation for her departure to the Western Pacific 15 November.

With the forthcoming deployment there would be little opportunity for JOHNSTON to complete her competitive requirements for Fiscal Year 1968. In an effort to overcome this handicap, JOHNSTON was scheduled to join other units of Destroyer Squadron FOUR in a four-day period of competitive exercises in the Charleston operation areas for the period 28-31 August. During this time, she conducted anti-aircraft, electronics countermeasures (ECM), manovering, gunnery, engineering, and anti-submarine warfare exercises. JOHNSTON was scheduled to have one more at-sea period before her deployment to Vietnam: she would serve as Rescue Destroyer for the aircraft carrier USS SHANGRI LA (CVA-38) while she conducted flight operations off the east coast of Florida for the period of 26-30 September. Fortunately, JOHNSTON's rescue services were not required during this period, although a SHANGRI LA aircraft tractor was lost over the side with no personnel aboard. The ship returned to Charleston to make final preparations for her second 1967 Navy Technical Proficiency Inspection (NPI).

On 2 and 3 October, an inspection team from Nuclear Weapons Training Center again visited JOHNSTON, and in the two-day inspection she exceeded her previous OUTSTANDING NPI score, this time achieving a mark of 97, the highest (with one other ship) score achieved by any unit of Cruiser-Destroyer Flotilla SIX in 1967.

A major part of the month of October was spent by JOHNSTON in the Charleston Naval Shipyard, where she was outfitted with probe refueling apparatus on her forward and after refueling stations. With this new equipment she would be able to more expeditiously hook up to an oiler, refuel, and break away. With this outfitting complete, JOHNSTON returned to her berth at the Charleston Naval Station to make final preparations for her Vietnam deployment.

One day prior to her departure for Vietnam, JOHNSTON, while moored to a pier at Charleston, was struck amidships on the starboard side by a tug maneuvering between piers. No damage other than a dented hull and one broken longitudinal was suspected, and repairs having been completed, JOHNSTON departed 15 November for Vietnam with Destroyer Division FOUR TWO. Shortly after leaving Charleston, JOHNSTON engineers discovered a wiped spring bearing on the starboard propeller shaft, and the shaft was locked and the bearing repaired. On 18 November, a second bearing on the starboard shaft was discovered overheating badly, causing JOHNSTON to suspect shaft misalignment, possibly as a result of the tug incident four days before. She was ordered into Mayport, Florida to effect repairs. Arriving 19 November, JOHNSTON worked with shipyard personnel to reset the bearings, and repairs completed, departed Mayport 24 November to transit to the Western Pacific independently.

JOHNSTON transited the Panama Canal 28 November, and arrived in Pearl Harbor 10 December for two days of briefings on the forthcoming mission. Departing the 11th, JOHNSTON proceeded to Subic Bay, Philippines, with fuel stops in Midway and Guam on 17 and 23 December, respectively, and finally arrived in Subic 27 December, where she celebrated the coming of the New Year.

Roster of Officers as of 31 December

Robert W. CURRAN, CDR, USN

Commanding Officer

Ralph A. TURNER, LCDR, USN

Executive Officer

(b) (6)

Operations Officer

Engineering Officer

Weapons Officer

Assistant Operations Officer

Repair Officer

Anti-submarine Warfare Officer

Combat Information Center Officer

Main Propulsion Assistant

Supply Officer

Gunnery Assistant

DASH Officer

Damage Control Assistant

Communications Officer

Electronics Material Officer

Legal Officer

First Lieutenant



U. S. S. JOHNSTON (DD821)

c/o FLEET POST OFFICE
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

DD821/RWC:kh

5750

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14 JAN 1969

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R. W. CURRAN

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CHINA AND HISTORY

USS JORDISON (DD 824)

Commander Robert H. GURLEY, USN

Commanding USN 001

1963

CHNAV Report 5750-2

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1966 CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>REFER TO PAGE:</u>
1 JANUARY	Inport, Subic Bay, P.I.	II-1
7 JANUARY	Entered Vietnam Combat Zone; Commenced Plane-guarding for USS RANGER (CVA 61)	II-1
17 JANUARY	Commenced three day ASW exercise period	II-2
1 FEBRUARY	Entered Drydock, Subic Bay for repairs to starboard rudder	II-2
8 FEBRUARY	Arrived I Corps for NGFS assignment	II-3
9 FEBRUARY	Received hostile fire from DMZ area	II-4
12 FEBRUARY	Received hostile fire from DMZ area	II-4
12 MARCH	Inport, Kaohsiung, Taiwan	II-6
23 MARCH	Commenced three day ASW exercise period	II-6
28 MARCH	Returned to the "Camling"	II-6
4 APRIL	Yankee Station Operations with RANGER	II-6
13 APRIL	Inport, Subic Bay, P.I.	II-6
15 APRIL	Inport, Hong Kong, B.C.C.	II-6
22 APRIL	Yankee Station Operations with RANGER	II-6
6 MAY	Final Departure from Combat Zone	II-7
7 MAY	Inport, Subic Bay, P.I.	II-7
13 MAY	Inport, Yokosuka, Japan	II-7
31 MAY	Base Stop for fuel, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii	II-7
6 JUNE	Inport, San Diego, California	II-7

CHRONOLOGY Continued:

18 JUNE	Transited Panama Canal	II-8
22 JUNE	Arrived Charleston, South Carolina	II-8
26 JULY	Placed in Reduced Operational Status	II-8
5 AUGUST	INSURV Inspection	II-8
14 SEPTEMBER	DESRON FOUR Change of Command aboard JOHNSTON	II-9

1968 - NARRATIVE of YEAR'S EVENTS

COMMAND

USS JOHNSTON (DD 821), a Charleston, South Carolina-based FRAM I destroyer, was commanded throughout 1968 by Commander Robert W. CURRAN, U.S. NAVY. JOHNSTON is assigned to Destroyer Division Forty-Two of Destroyer Squadron Four. Destroyer Squadron Four, primarily an anti-submarine warfare squadron, is a unit of Cruiser-Destroyer Flotilla SIX.

At the end of 1968 JOHNSTON's enlisted strength was approximately 175 enlisted. This low number was due to JOHNSTON's Reduced Operational Status. Her officer strength remained at 15. While deployed to WESTPAC the JOHNSTON crew averaged 265 enlisted and 17 officers.¹

OPERATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Nineteen Hundred and Sixty-Eight was one of the most memorable of the USS JOHNSTON's twenty-three years of naval service. For the first time in her history this post World War II Destroyer engaged an enemy in hostile action. Not only did JOHNSTON take an enemy force under fire, but was herself taken under fire by enemy gun emplacements in Vietnam's Demilitarized Zone.

The officers and men of the JOHNSTON celebrated New Year's Eve in Subic Bay, Philippine Islands. Shortly thereafter the ship steamed westward from Subic the final few hundred miles to her ultimate destination, the Vietnam Combat Zone. Entering the Combat Zone on 7 January, JOHNSTON headed north to Yankee Station and a rendezvous with the USS RANGER, with whom she would spend many of the next one hundred and

¹ See Appendix A, page A-1

eighty days.

Until mid-January JOHNSTON accompanied the RANGER, providing screening, support and lifeguarding services while RANGER conducted daily air strikes against enemy positions in North and South Vietnam. On 17 January, JOHNSTON was detached from RANGER for a three-day period of intensive anti-submarine warfare exercises with a submerged target submarine and aircraft from the ASW Aircraft Carrier USS KEARSARGE.

During this ASW period JOHNSTON used operationally for the first time her newly acquired Helicopter In-Flight Refueling (HIFR) capability. ASW helicopters from KEARSARGE, participating with JOHNSTON in coordinated submarine search-and-attack operations, ran low on fuel while on station. JOHNSTON refueled the helos while they hovered over her fantail, by passing hoses up from the stern of the ship into the thirty "chopper"s" tank. Jet-fuel was then pumped up and the helicopters were refueled, allowing them to continue with their mission. By providing this service JOHNSTON became the first Charleston ship to conduct both day and night Helicopter In-Flight Refueling.²

On 20 January, JOHNSTON returned to the RANGER group to resume her screening and support duties. She continued on this assignment until 28 January, when she was detached to proceed into drydock in Subic Bay, Philippines, for repairs to her starboard rudder. JOHNSTON did not remain out of water long. Having been drydocked on 1 February, repairs were completed by the 4th, and JOHNSTON put to sea ready to undertake her second major assignment of the tour - Naval Gunfire Support.

2 See Appendix C, page C-1

JOHNSTON arrived 8 February off the coast of South Vietnam adjacent to the Demilitarized Zone. At that time, Captain Dale V. SCHERER, USN, Commander of Destroyer Squadron FOUR - JOHNSTON's Squadron Commander - was acting as Naval Gunfire Support Task Unit Commander. JOHNSTON reported for duty and target assignments were immediately received. These targets were the first of a long list of enemy positions that would be assigned to the destroyer's four five-inch guns. Throughout the remainder of February and well into March JOHNSTON toured "I Corps," firing in support of the U.S. First and Third Marine Divisions and the Army's First Air Cavalry Division.

On the third day of action at the DMZ, JOHNSTON was called in to provide supporting fire as enemy artillery opened up on units of the Third Marine Division. JOHNSTON steamed close to the beach near the DMZ and for two hours provided rapid suppression fire. While firing on a target in the DMZ JOHNSTON was suddenly taken under fire simultaneously by three artillery emplacements in and north of the Demilitarized Zone. At least five rounds were observed to fall close aboard the ship. JOHNSTON immediately brought her guns to bear on the hostile emplacements, and in the ensuing action silenced one of the enemy's big guns while maneuvering to remain unscathed.³

Two days later, JOHNSTON was called to take under fire an estimated battalion-sized force of North Vietnamese regulars assembled

3 See appendices D - page D-30 and E - page E-1

in an area two miles south of Gio Linh. The "spotter" on the beach brought the destroyer's guns to bear on the target and JOHNSTON began rapid destruction fire with high explosive ammunition. Backed up by Marine artillery fire JOHNSTON drove the massed troops north toward the DMZ. U.S. troops sweeping through the area behind JOHNSTON fire counted forty-four enemy dead, twenty-two of which were directly credited to the destroyer's accurate fire.⁴

Minutes before her guns were called into service against the North Vietnamese Battalion, JOHNSTON was steaming north at a short distance from the beach with a mission to engage enemy artillery positions entrenched in Cap Lay, a high bluff north of the DMZ. While on this mission JOHNSTON was fired upon for the second time since her arrival. One enemy round fell a scant sixty yards off the destroyer's beam. The ensuing duel was quickly broken off, however, when JOHNSTON was diverted to take the NVA Battalion under fire.

From the Demilitarized Zone, JOHNSTON moved south to a position along the coast adjacent to the city of Hue. Hue had fallen during the TET Offensive and the Allied Troops were most anxious to get it back. For five days JOHNSTON provided supporting fire to our troops engaged in the fierce battle for that city. Although extremely accurate fire was necessary to avoid hitting our own troops, JOHNSTON pounded targets within the city of Hue and suspected enemy positions and supply lines on the periphery. Lieutenant General Cushman, in praising those who participated in the Battle of Hue, said, "...the extremely narrow and

⁴ See appendices F - page F-1, and G, page G-1.

dangerous zones of action within the city...(made) pinpoint accuracy on the part of supporting arms... an absolute necessity and was done commendably." ⁵

After the action at Hue, JOHNSTON moved south to the vicinity of Da Nang. In a surprise action there she caught a dug-in force of Viet Cong troops. JOHNSTON delivered over one hundred rounds of projectiles on this concentration in a short period of time. Upon completion of this engagement, JOHNSTON returned to the DMZ. For the remainder of this tour on the "gunline" she roamed up and down the coast of "I Corps," firing on enemy positions. On call twenty-four hours a day, JOHNSTON delivered her accurate fire in "call-for-fire" missions, observed and "spotted" by an observer on the beach or in the air, and in harassment and interdiction fire, which is unobserved and designed to deny enemy troops rest and freedom of movement.

JOHNSTON departed the "I Corps" gunfire support area on 10 March, having delivered over 7500 rounds of high explosive ammunition in support of Army and Marine units.⁶ The Naval Gun Fire Liaison Officer of the Third Marine Division radioed upon JOHNSTON's departure, "This visit has increased our admiration for your spirit, aggressiveness and fast response to our requests for support. You are one of the top shooters in the DMZ Gun Club."⁷

5 See Appendix O - page O-3

6 See Appendix H - page H-1

7 See Appendix O - page O-4

After thirty-two days of uninterrupted gunfire support, JOHNSTON steamed to Keelung, Taiwan, where she spent a well-deserved and much enjoyed five-day period of liberty and upkeep. Departing Keelung on 20 March, JOHNSTON again joined the SEVENTH FLEET Anti-Submarine Warfare Training Task Unit for three days of dawn-to-midnight exercises. During this training period JOHNSTON had the opportunity to conduct single and multiple ship attacks on a submerged target sub, and scored two "hits" against the submarine with homing exercise torpedoes.³

Upon completion of her three day ASW exercise period JOHNSTON joined the USS RAIDER to resume her mission of screening and life-guarding. This tour only lasted a short three days at which time JOHNSTON was called back to provide supporting fire for troops operating in the vicinity of the LZ. Firing in support of the Third Marine Division, the destroyer's guns delivered over 3000 rounds of five-inch ammunition in and near the coastal regions of the LZ. Outstanding target coverage and heavy damage were routinely reported by observers ashore during the many engagements of this second "gunline" tour. After seven days of around-the-clock bombardment of enemy positions, JOHNSTON retired to seaward, departing the gunline for the final time of her Vietnam deployment. Her total number of rounds expended in combat exceeded 10,600.

From the coast of Vietnam, JOHNSTON rejoined the RAIDER and resumed her duties as a supporting unit of RAIDER's Attack Carrier Striking Group. JOHNSTON remained in the Tonkin Gulf with RAIDER

³ See Appendix C - pages C-6 and C-7

until 12 April, when both departed for a long awaited liberty period in Hong Kong, British Crown Colony. JOHNSTON arrived in Hong Kong on 15 April, having made a brief stop in Subic Bay enroute. If the JOHNSTON crew fell in love with any port on the WESTPAC Cruise, this was it. Five days seemed to fly by like hours, and soon Hong Kong was just a memory.

JOHNSTON returned to Tonkin Gulf after Hong Kong, and remained there with RANGER until 6 May, when she departed both the RANGER and the Gulf of Tonkin for the final time.⁹ JOHNSTON steamed to Subic Bay after leaving the combat zone, and there off-loaded WESTPAC equipment. After a short stay in Subic, JOHNSTON headed north for Yokosuka, Japan, with a brief fuel stop in Buckner Bay, Okinawa.

Seven days were spent in Yokosuka, Japan, and again the ship went into drydock for repairs to her starboard rudder. During the stay a tour was organized to Tokyo, and the crew loved the world's largest city. After an extremely good liberty and upkeep period JOHNSTON headed home. On 31 May, she made a brief stop for fuel in Pearl Harbor. Eager to make up the time lost while in drydock in Japan, the ship left the same day, and half way to San Diego overtook the other ship's of her permanent unit, Destroyer Division Forty-Two.

On 6 June DESDIV 42 arrived in San Diego for another leave and

⁹ See Appendix C - page C-5

period of upkeep that would last until 10 June. Upon arrival in San Diego leave was granted to West Coast sailors attached to the ship. These men were to rejoin the ship upon its arrival in Charleston, South Carolina. On 18 June, JOHNSON and the other units of DESDIV 42, made a brief stop at Rodman, Panama Canal Zone, prior to transiting the canal. Here JOHNSON embarked Captain J.J. TICE, USN, Commander of Destroyer Division Forty-Two, for the last leg of the seven and one half month journey. On 22 June, JOHNSON led the other units of DESDIV 42 up the Cooper River to a joyful reunion with friends and loved ones, her long cruise over. 10

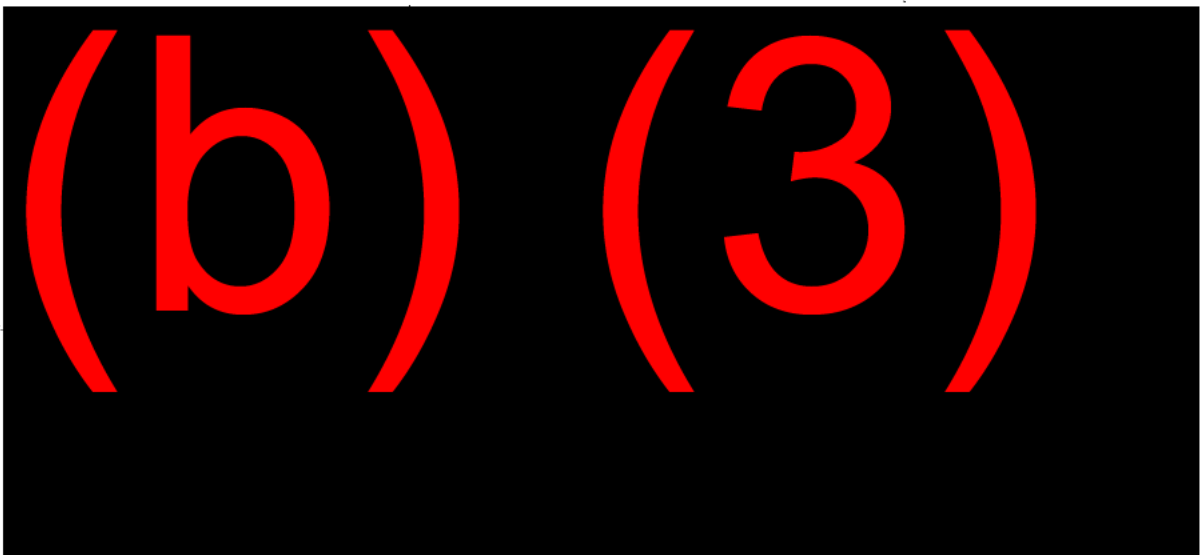
For one month after her return to her homeport of Charleston, the men of the JOHNSON enjoyed a period of intensive leave and liberty. Upon completion of this period the ship went into full gear to ready itself for the Inspection and Survey Board's (INSURV) inspection scheduled for 5 August. This inspection was incident to the shipyard period scheduled for early January 1969. The INSURV Board thoroughly inspected JOHNSON and found her completely fit for further active Naval Service.

During this same period of time JOHNSON received word that she was being placed in reduced operational status (ROS). This meant she would lose two-thirds of her combat-trained crew, and would not leave homeport again until after completion of the scheduled yard period. In early August the Officers of JOHNSON finished making the decisions

10 see Appendix I - pages I-1, I-2, and I-3

~~CONFIDENTIAL-Modified Handling Authorized~~

about which third of the crew to retain, and in early September the drawdown began. Almost immediately JOHNSTON crew was cut to approximately one hundred and fifty persons. Many long hours were spent in advance planning to maintain emergency fire party integrity on a duty section basis, and to ensure that the personnel on board would be able to perform the required FMS, etc.



On 14 September, Captain Frank E. MCKENZIE, USN, relieved Captain Dale V. SCHENCKENBORN, USN, as Commander of Destroyer Squadron FOUR. The change-of-command ceremony took place aboard JOHNSTON, one of the ships. Commodore SCHENCKENBORN had directed and fought alongside off the Vietnamese Coast at the DMZ.

For the remainder of the calendar year personnel aboard the JOHNSTON routinely went about performing their required tasks. They learned to accomplish much of what had been accomplished before by two hundred and sixty-five men with only one hundred and twenty-five.

~~CONFIDENTIAL-Modified Handling Authorized~~

Although the ship could not carry out any operational missions in her reduced operational status, she did handle all administrative matters in an outstanding manner and finished up the calendar year with a grade of outstanding in every department of the ship in the annual administrative inspection.

Commander Destroyer Division FOUR TWO
U. S. Atlantic Fleet
FPO, New York 09501

1 June 1968

The 1,220 officers and men of Destroyer Division FORTY TWO and USS DEWEY (DLG 14) will be reunited with their families and friends on June 22. The Charleston-based DesDiv 42 ships, USS CONE (DD 866), USS James C. OWENS (DD 776) and USS JOHNSTON (DD 821), and the Norfolk-based DEWEY are returning to their homeports following a seven-month deployment in the Western Pacific.

Since departure from the United States last November, the ships have transited the South Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea and Pacific Ocean; and operated in the East China Sea, South China Sea, the Philippine Sea, the Gulf of Tonkin and the Sea of Japan. Each ship has steamed an average of 55,000 miles -- the equivalent of nine round trips to Europe. Fifteen million gallons of fuel -- enough to fill 1,875 railway cars -- were consumed during the deployment.

Ports visited by the ships included Rodman, Panama Canal Zone; Manzanillo, Mexico; San Diego, Calif.; Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; Midway Island; Yokosuka, Sasebo, Beppu,

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and Shimoda, Japan; Buckner Bay, Okinawa; Subic Bay, Republic of Philippines; Kaohsiung, Taiwan; DaNang, Nha Trang, and Cam Ranh Bay, Republic of Vietnam; and Hong Kong, British Crown Colony.

While in Vietnamese waters DesDiv 42 ships fired 31,000 rounds of ammunition in naval gunfire support missions against Viet Cong and North Vietnamese troops and installations. Nearly one third of these missions were observed and controlled visually by airborne spotters or by ground spotters in forward observation posts. The official gun damage assessment by the spotters totalled 59 enemy killed, 135 bunkers and fortifications destroyed, more than 468 structures destroyed or damaged, five sampans sunk, three bridges damaged and miles of supply and escape routes interdicted. Many other assignments were fired by the Division as unobserved harassment and interdiction missions.

Other vital contributions to the war effort were made without firing a gun. DEWEY, serving as flagship for the

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3-3-3-3

Division Commander, Captain John J. Tice, III, USN, (b)
(6)
[REDACTED], and CONE spent 11 days as
a Search and Rescue (SAR) team in the Gulf of Tonkin. The
SAR station was well within the range of enemy jet aircraft
and PT boats. DEWEY and CONE participated in three separate SAR operations and rescued a total of six American airmen.

As the third Atlantic Fleet guided missile frigate to be deployed to the Seventh Fleet, DEWEY's primary mission was to provide an advanced Search and Rescue command and control center for the prosecution and coordination of Navy and Air Force Search and Rescue incidents in the North Vietnam and Gulf of Tonkin areas. DEWEY also provided a mobile helicopter landing platform for SAR helicopters on station in the Gulf of Tonkin. In addition, she provided anti-air protection for the Yankee Station carriers. She controlled several hundred aircraft during the deployment.

One of DEWEY's most gratifying accomplishments occurred soon after her arrival on SAR station. Early Jan. 23

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the SAR team was called into action when radar and radio contact were lost with the helicopter assigned to DEWEY. Emergency communications were established with the pilot and three crew members as DEWEY steamed to the scene at flank speed. Within minutes DEWEY was alongside the downed airmen and their recovery was quickly executed. Several hours later an attack aircraft returning from a strike crashed into the gulf. For the second time that day DEWEY raced to the rescue, guided by aircraft orbiting over the scene of the crash. The downed aircraft's wingman reported sighting one of the two missing airmen. With the position marked by smoke from the sighting aircraft, DEWEY dispatched a helicopter to effect the rescue. Smoke and darkness prevented the helicopter recovery and necessitated the ship's rescue of the pilot.

On Jan. 29 DEWEY and OWENS were diverted northward. Arriving in the Sea of Japan on Feb. 1 DEWEY was again assigned duties as a Search and Rescue unit and as an advance Anti-Air Warfare Picket Ship. Utilizing her long-range air

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search capabilities the ship served as an advance unit stationed to alert the main force of potentially hostile air and surface forces, and, if necessary, to defend the force. While acting in this capacity DEWEY was responsible for the early detection, and subsequent intercept, of unidentified aircraft overflying the Attack Carrier Striking Force. Fighting the elements of bitter cold winds and temperatures and high seas in the Sea of Japan the ship completed an arduous but highly successful 58 continuous days at sea.

DEWEY returned to the Gulf of Tonkin on Mar. 30. Two days later her 365 officers and men welcomed the ship's sixth Commanding Officer when Commander Virgil C. Snyder, USN, (b) (6), relieved Commander Reid Stringfellow, USN, of (b) (6), as Commanding Officer.

During her subsequent tours in Vietnamese waters DEWEY provided protective cover for an Attack Carrier Striking Group prior to departing to a picket station where she

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operated for 24 days as part of a large, complex detection network developed to provide early warning against any possible hostile aircraft attempting to penetrate from North Vietnam.

Like DEWEY, OWENS served in the Sea of Japan during the month of February following her initial assignment with JOHNSTON and the attack aircraft carrier USS RANGER (CVA-61) in the Gulf of Tonkin and a brief tour on the gunline. While in Vietnamese waters OWENS, commanded by Commander Cornell C. Angleman, USN, of (b) (6) completed a distinguished tour of duty as a Naval Gunfire Support ship for allied ground forces ashore. No newcomer to a combat zone, OWENS performed similar gunline duties during World War II and the Korean Conflict, each time bringing credit upon herself and the Naval Service.

Rejoining RANGER enroute to the Sea of Japan OWENS' duties included screening, support and lifeguarding during the carrier's flight operations. On Feb. 24 her 287 men concluded a memorable 50-day period at sea.

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7-7-7-7-7

OWENS returned to the Gulf of Tonkin early in March and reported for gunfire support duty off the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). She immediately responded to calls from Marines ashore to attack enemy troop concentrations north of Hue with her 5-inch batteries. The ship blasted enemy emplacements for more than 15 hours before being diverted to other gunfire assignments. OWENS distinguished herself while firing in support of U. S. Army and Marine and South Vietnamese units during her second tour on the gunline.

During subsequent tours of duty OWENS continued to pound Viet Cong positions ashore with high explosive projectiles. In daylight call-for-fire missions she destroyed enemy structures and interdicted supplies moving along mountain trails. During night harassment firing OWENS' gunners were rewarded by the sight of fiery secondary explosions. Gunfire spotters ashore confirmed OWENS' effectiveness.

Visually controlling the fall of shot without aid of air or ground spotters on May 4, OWENS destroyed three Viet Cong structures, damaged one, and sent several rounds of

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high-explosive projectiles directly into a cave used by the Viet Cong. This type of mission, called direct-fire, is seldom received by gunline ships, and it poses a challenge to the accuracy and teamwork of shipboard gun personnel.

In two days of previous firing in support of the Capital Division of the Republic of Korea forces near Qui Nhon OWENS inflicted heavy damage on Viet Cong assembly areas. She shot many rounds of explosives into the Phu Cat Mountain region.

More than 7,000 rounds of 5-inch/38 ammunition were fired along the Vietnamese coastline from the DMZ in the north to the Phu Cat Mountains in the south. The accuracy of her firepower recorded 12 Viet Cong killed in action, 101 bunkers and fortifications destroyed, 75 structures damaged, several secondary explosions observed indicating probable arms caches, and miles of supply and escape routes interdicted.

Just prior to her departure from the Western Pacific

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9-9-9-9-9

OWENS visited the small fishing village of Shimoda, Japan, to participate in the 29th Black Ship Festival, May 16-18. The festival commemorates Commodore Matthew C. Perry's historic negotiations which opened Shimoda to his black-hulled warships on May 20, 1854. This led to the Japanese-American Treaty of Trade and Amity in 1860 and sparked the development of Yokohama as a major trading port. It provided the foundation upon which our present ties of friendship with Japan have grown.

OWENS spent three days in Shimoda as an emissary of the U. S. Navy and was beseiged by hundreds of visitors daily. OWENS' sailors marched proudly in a parade through Shimoda's narrow streets before thousands of warm-hearted citizenry. After the parade they played an enthusiastic softball game with the Shimoda All Stars, losing 11-13 to the local team.

In contrast to the veteran OWENS, combat was a new experience for CONE and her crew. Despite CONE's 23 years of service, there is no record that she had ever fired a

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10-10-10-10-10

shot in anger. This situation quickly changed. On Feb. 8
CONE's Commanding Officer, Commander Arthur Coday, USNR,
[REDACTED] (b) (6) ., steamed his ship to
her station at the DMZ during the period preliminary to the
Tet offensive when the North Vietnamese were applying heavy
pressure while infiltrating large units to the south. The
Third Marine Division wanted all the help that CONE's 5-
inch guns could give. For 11 days CONE's 293 officers and
men worked around the clock to provide gunfire support,
firing 7,500 rounds at the enemy.

Gun barrels became so hot the paint blistered. Men
who were not on watch voluntarily backed up the crews in the
magazines and handling rooms so that high rates of fire
could be sustained against enemy troop concentrations. On
one occasion, CONE's gunfire, called upon to soften up an
area that had been infiltrated by 800 North Vietnamese regu-
lars, drove the enemy battalion out of the area and into
the trees. Marine Corps units mopping up afterward credited
the ship with 22 enemy killed.

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DESDIV 42
11-11-11-11-11

Ammunition had to be replenished at sea, usually at night. When the 11-day tour was over, it was calculated that more than three-quarters of a million pounds of ammunition had been hand carried by the crew during that period.

While deployed CONE participated in every area of duty which general purpose destroyers are called upon to perform. In addition to her tours of duty on the gunline, CONE served on SAR station assisting Navy and Air Force aviators in distress, on Sea Dragon patrolling the coast of North Vietnam to interdict supplies moving south, and on operations with the aircraft carriers on Yankee Station. CONE served as senior screen ship for the attack aircraft carrier USS KITTY HAWK (CVA-63) for 45 days.

During her tours on the gunline CONE fired 12,881 rounds of ammunition and is credited with 282 buildings destroyed or damaged, 33 fortified bunkers destroyed or damaged, 25 known enemy killed, three bridges damaged, five sampans destroyed, and 14 secondary explosions observed.

Even in the pressure of combat operations there was

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12-12-12-12-

time for two family reunions. On Jan. 16 the 173rd Airborne Division, U. S. Army, made arrangements for Specialist 5th Class (b) (6) to go to DaNang where he was reunited aboard CONE with his brother, Petty Officer Third Class (b) (6).

Two months later after an exchange of messages between CONE and the 54th Signal Battalion, Army Specialist 4th Class (b) (6) boarded CONE in the harbor of Nha Trang for a visit with his brother, Petty Officer Third Class (b) (6). The latter reunion was unexpectedly prolonged for three days when CONE was called suddenly to move south on a gunfire support mission.

JOHNSTON

JOHNSTON's first assignment in the combat zone was in company with RANGER and OWENS. Following ten days of screening and support duties while RANGER conducted daily air strikes against enemy positions in North and South Vietnam, JOHNSTON participated in Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) exercises with a submerged target submarine and aircraft from the ASW aircraft carrier USS KEARSARGE (CVS-33).

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13-13-13-13

During this intensive training period JOHNSTON used operationally for the first time her newly acquired Helicopter In-Flight Refueling capability. ASW helicopters from KEARSARGE, participating with JOHNSTON in coordinated submarine search-and-attack operations, hovered over JOHNSTON's fantail. Hoses were sent up from the ship and the tanks of the turbine-powered helicopters were filled, allowing them to continue their mission. By providing this service, JOHNSTON became the first Charleston ship to conduct both day and night Helicopter In-Flight Refueling.

Upon completion of the three-day ASW exercises JOHNSTON returned to duty with RANGER. On Feb. 1 she went into dry-dock in Subic Bay, R. P., for repairs to her starboard rudder. Four days later she was enroute to her second major assignment: Naval Gunfire Support. Target assignments included many enemy positions from the DMZ to DaNang, firing in support of the U. S. First and Third Marine Divisions and the U. S. Army First Cavalry Division.

During the third day of action at the DMZ, JOHNSTON

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DESDIV 42
14-14-14-14-14

was called in to provide supporting fire as enemy artillery opened up on units of the Third Marine Division. After two hours of suppression fire against the enemy big guns, JOHNSTON was taken under fire simultaneously by three artillery emplacements in and north of the DMZ. At least five enemy rounds were observed to fall close aboard. Immediately, the destroyer's guns were brought to bear against the hostile emplacements. As a result of JOHNSTON's counterbattery fire at least one of the enemy big guns was silenced.

Two days later JOHNSTON was called to take under fire an estimated battalion-sized force of North Vietnamese regulars discovered in a troop assembly area near Gio Linh. Outstanding target coverage was reported by observers ashore. U. S. troops, sweeping through the area behind JOHNSTON's naval gunfire, counted 44 enemy dead, 22 of which, along with several destroyed structures, were credited to the ship's guns.

In successive assignments near Hue, DaNang and the DMZ

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DESDIV 42
15-15-15-15

JOHNSTON continued to fire against enemy positions. On call 24 hours a day JOHNSTON delivered her accurate fire in call-for-fire missions in which spotters ashore observed and adjusted the fall of shot and in "harassment and interdiction" missions which were unobserved, but which were designed to interdict enemy supply lines and deny hostile troops rest and freedom of movement.

During her 32 uninterrupted days of gunfire support, JOHNSTON delivered more than 7,500 rounds of 5-inch projectiles onto enemy targets. An additional 3,100 rounds were expended during her subsequent assignments on the gunline.

Commander Robert W. Curran, USN, of (b) (6), is Commanding Officer of JOHNSTON and her 275 proud crew members.

The DesDiv 42 ships and DEWEY return to the Atlantic Fleet Cruiser-Destroyer Force veteran crews, seasoned by months of combat, and holding records of accomplishment and praise which reflect the professionalism and dedication of the Navy's fighting ships in Southeast Asia.